JS 44 (Rev. 12/12)

#### CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS Linda M. Smith 201 Overlook Road Philadelphia, PA 19128				DEFENDANTS Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company 200 Hopmeadow Street Simsbury, CT 06089						
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Philadelphia (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.						
William J. Fox, Esquire (2 1219 Spruce Street Philadelphia, PA 19107	2005	eth Berman, Esquire Market Street, Ste.3 delphia. PA 19103	9 950	Attorneys (If Known)						
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)		TIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPA	L PARTIES				
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	■ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)			(For Diversity Cases Only) PT en of This State		Incorporated or Pri of Business In T		PTF  3 4	DEF	
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh)	ip of Parties in Item III)		en of Another State		Incorporated and P of Business In A		5	<b>X</b> 5	
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT			I EC	ADEETFIDE/BENALTV	DAN	WDUDTCV	ОТИРВ	CTATIT	TEC	
CONTRACT  110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise  REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Forcelosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 240 Torts to Land 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airplane  315 Airplane Product Liability  320 Assault, Libel &	PERSONAL INJURY  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability  367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability  368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERT  370 Other Fraud  371 Truth in Lending  380 Other Personal Property Damage  385 Property Damage Product Liability  PRISONER PETITION Habeas Corpus:  463 Alien Detainee  510 Motions to Vacate Sentence  530 General 535 Death Penalty Other:  540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	7	DRFEITURE/PENALTY  5 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881  0 Other  LABOR  0 Fair Labor Standards Act 0 Labor/Management Relations 0 Railway Labor Act 1 Family and Medical Leave Act 0 Other Labor Litigation 1 Employee Retirement Income Security Act  IMMIGRATION 2 Naturalization Application 5 Other Immigration Actions	422 Appe   423 With 28 U   FROPEI   820 Copy   830 Pater   840 Trade   861 HIA   862 Black   863 DIW.   864 SSID   865 RSI (	SC 157  RTY RIGHTS  rights  it emark  SECURITY (1395ff)  ic Lung (923)  C/DIWW (405(g))  Title XVI	375 False C 400 State R 410 Antitru 430 Banks a 450 Comme 460 Deporte 470 Rackete Corrupi 490 Cable/S 850 Securit Exchan 890 Other S 891 Agricul 895 Freedor Act 896 Arbitra 899 Admini Act/Rec	eapportion st and Bankin erce ation eer Influer t Organiza mer Credit Sat TV ies/Comm inge Statutory A ltural Acts mental M m of Infor- tion istrative Pi view or A f Decision utionality	nment ng nced and tions nodities/ Actions idatters mation rocedure	
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		Remanded from Appellate Court		stated or	r District	<ul><li>6 Multidistr Litigation</li></ul>				
( <del></del>	Cite the U.S. Civil Sta	tute under which you are	filing (L	Oo not cite jurisdictional state		versity):				
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of ca	iuse:				******************				
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.			D	DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:  JURY DEMAND: X Yes						
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKE	T NUMBER				
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATT	DRNEY C	DERECORD						
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#### Case 2:16-cv-04162-JD Tates District Court 12 Page 2 of 12

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA -- DESIGNATION FORM to be used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to appropriate calendar. Address of Plaintiff: 201 Overlook Road, Philadelphia, PA 19128 Address of Defendant: Def. #1, 200 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06089, Def. #2 1919 Flowers Circle, Thomasville, GA 31757 Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: (Use Reverse Side For Additional Space) Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation owning 10% or more (Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P. 7.1(a)) No□ Yes□ Does this case involve multidistrict litigation possibilities? Yes□ No X RELATED CASE, IF ANY: Case Number: Date Terminated: Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions:

1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?

Yes No X 2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated Yes□ No X action in this court? 3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?

Yes

No X terminated action in this court? Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights case filed by the same individual? Yes□ No X CIVIL: (Place / in ONE CATEGORY ONLY) B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases: Federal Question Cases: 1. □ Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. ☐ Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts □ FELA □ Airplane Personal Injury ☐ Assault, Defamation☐ Marine Personal Injury □ Jones Act-Personal Injury □ Antitrust 5. □ Motor Vehicle Personal Injury □ Patent 6. □ Other Personal Injury (Please specify) 6. 7. □ Labor-Management Relations Civil Rights □ Products Liability 8. 

Habeas Corpus 8. Products Liability -Asbestos 9. □ Securities Act(s) Cases
10. □ Social Security Review Cases 9. 🗖 All other Diversity Cases (Please specify) 11. X All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify) ERISA ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION (Check appropriate Category) William J. Fox, Esquire , counsel of record do hereby certify: X Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs; X Relief other than monetary damages is sought. 69896 DATE: 8/2/2016 Attorney I.D.# Attorne NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38. I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.

69898

Attorney I.D.#

8/2/2016

DATE:

CIV. 609 (6/08)

APPENDIX I

## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

#### **CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM**

Telephone	FAX Number	E-Mail Addres	
215.546.2477	546.4698	bill@wjfoxpc.com	
<u>7/28/16</u> Date	William J. Fox Attorney-at-flaw	Linda M. Smith Attorney for Plain	
(f) Standard Management – C	Cases that do not fall into	any one of the other tracks.	(X)
(e) Special Management – Ca commonly referred to as c the court. (See reverse sid management cases.)	complex and that need spe	ecial or intense management by	( )
(d) Asbestos – Cases involvir exposure to asbestos.	ng claims for personal inj	ury or property damage from	( )
(c) Arbitration - Cases requir	ed to be designated for a	rbitration under Local Civil Rule	e 53.2. ( )
(b) Social Security – Cases r and Human Services deny		cision of the Secretary of Health rity Benefits	( )
(a) Habeas Corpus – Cases b	orought under 28 U.S.C. §	§2241 through §2255.	( )
SELECT ONE OF THE FO	OLLOWING CASE MA	ANAGEMENT TRACKS:	
shall complete a case Manage complaint and serve a copy or form.) In the event that a de- defendant shall, with its first	ement Track Designation of all defendants. (See § 1: fendant does not agree we appearance, submit to the ment track designation for	Reduction Plan of this court, court Form in all civil cases at the tire 03 of the plan set forth on the revith the plaintiff regarding said declerk of court and serve on the property of the track to which	ne of filing the erse side of this esignation, that plaintiff and all
and FLOWERS FOODS, INC.	; ;		
HARTFORD LIFE AND AC INSURANCE COMPANY	CIDENT :		
	v. :	:NO.	
LINDA M. SMITH	:	CIVIL ACTION	

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

LINDA M. SMITH,

Civil Action No.

Plaintiff.

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v.

HARTFORD LIFE AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COMPANY

And

:

FLOWERS FOODS, INC.

Defendants

Doromaunts

### COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATION OF THE EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT

Plaintiff Linda M. Smith ("Smith" or "Plaintiff"), by and through her undersigned counsel, in support of her Complaint, hereby pleads and avers as follows:

#### **Parties**

- 1. Plaintiff, Linda M. Smith, is a resident and citizen of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 2. Defendant, Flowers Foods, Inc. ("Flowers Foods") is a corporation with its headquarters located at 1919 Flowers Circle, Thomasville, Georgia 31757.
- 3. Defendant, Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company, ("The Hartford"), is an operating subsidiary of Hartford Life, the life insurance division of The Hartford Financial Services Group, a multinational insurance company. The company is headquartered at 200 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06089. The company provides life and accident insurance and annuities as well as long-term and short-term disability insurance all across the US, and is licensed to do business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- 4. Defendant Flowers Foods offered its employees long-term disability ("LTD") insurance through a policy of group disability insurance.
- 5. At all times relevant to this lawsuit, the Group Long Term Disability Plan For Employees of Flowers Foods, Inc., (the "Plan") was funded by a policy of group disability insurance issued by The Hartford to Flowers Foods, bearing policy no. GLT 675437 (the "LTD Policy"), which is incorporated into and forms a part of the Plan.
- 6. Defendant Flowers Foods is the Sponsor and the Administrator of the Plan.
- 7. The Hartford administered claims for benefits under the LTD Policy, including Plaintiff's claim for LTD benefits.

#### Jurisdiction and Venue

- 8. This is an action arising under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §§ 1001 et seq. ("ERISA"), to recover benefits due to the Plaintiff under the terms of the Plan, to enforce her rights under the terms of the Plan, to clarify her rights to future benefits under the terms of the Plan, and to recover costs and attorneys' fees.
- 9. This is an action brought pursuant to § 502(a), specifically § 502(a)(1)(B), of ERISA, codified at 29 U.S.C. § 1132(a).
- 10. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to § 502(e)(1) of ERISA, codified at 29 U.S.C. 1132(e)(1), and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
- 11. Under § 502(f) of ERISA, codified at 29 U.S.C. § 1132(f), the Court has jurisdiction without respect to the amount in controversy or the citizenship of the parties.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Plaintiff incorporates the entirety of the claim file The Hartford produced in connection with her claim for LTD benefits as if annexed hereto. (Bates nos. Hartford0001-0781).

12. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to § 502(e)(2) of ERISA, codified at 29 U.S.C. § 1132(e)(2), in that the subject plan is administered in this district, and the breaches of duty herein alleged occurred in this district, and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the events giving rise to the claim occurred in this district.

#### History of Case

- 13. Plaintiff worked for Flowers Foods, Inc. for more than 25 years at its Philadelphia, Pennsylvania facility. Plaintiff worked in the capacity of Production Supervisor for the last 15 years of her employment with Flowers Foods.
- 14. As an employee of Flowers Foods, Plaintiff was a beneficiary of the LTD Policy and was assigned Insured ID number 9000952920.
- 15. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Plaintiff was an Insured Person under the LTD Policy.
- 16. The Plan, including LTD Policy, is an employee welfare benefit plan within the meaning of § 3(1) of ERISA, codified at 29 U.S.C. § 1002(1), as it was established and is maintained by an employer for the purpose of providing for its participants or their beneficiaries benefits in the event of accident or disability.
- 17. The effective date of the Plan was August 1, 2005.
- 18. Plaintiff last worked as a Production Supervisor for Flowers Foods on April 23, 2013.
- 19. The Hartford determined that Plaintiff became fully disabled on April 24, 2013 due to significant medical ailments related to lumbar sprain/strain and herniation.
- 20. The Hartford determined that Plaintiff was prevented from performing the duties of her occupation and approved Plaintiff's claim for short-term benefits, followed by long-term disability benefits which began on October 21, 2013.

- 21. The Hartford continued to pay Plaintiff LTD benefits until February 22, 2016, when The Hartford terminated Plaintiff's LTD benefits.
- 22. Plaintiff timely appealed her denial of benefits and provided medical documentation from Michael Mandarino, MD clearly indicating Plaintiff is disabled from <u>any</u> occupation due to loss of use of her right shoulder after rotator cuff surgery, continued back symptoms from disc herniation, and the effects of required narcotic analgesic medications.
- 23. Amanda N. Boser, Claim Analyst for The Hartford, issued a final denial letter dated April 11, 2016 to Plaintiff.
- 24. The Hartford has not provided benefits to which Plaintiff is entitled pursuant to the terms of the LTD Policy.
- 25. Plaintiff has exhausted all administrative appeals.
- 26. Plaintiff remains unable to work and her condition persists to this day.

#### **COUNT I**

#### Claim for Benefits; 29 U.S.C. § 1132(a)(1)(B)

- 27. Plaintiff restates and re-alleges ¶¶ 1-26 herein.
- 28. Plaintiff is a beneficiary of the LTD Policy, an employee welfare benefits plan as defined by ERISA.
- **29.** Defendant The Hartford was charged with administering the terms of the LTD Policy, as covered by ERISA.
- 30. Defendants and their agents administered the Plan under a conflict of interest because they had authority to terminate Plaintiff's benefits and were in a position to realize financial gains from doing so.
- 31. Defendants wrongfully, arbitrarily, and capriciously denied Plaintiff the benefits to which

she is entitled pursuant to the terms of the LTD Policy after relying upon insufficient evidence and ignoring superior countervailing evidence.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Honorable Court grant her relief as follows:

- A. An award of damages equal to the total sum of LTD payments pursuant to the terms of the LTD Policy retroactive to February 22, 2016, with interest; and,
- B. An Order for reinstatement of Plaintiff's LTD benefits from the date of its Order until the termination of the LTD Policy by its terms or the Plaintiff's attainment of the age of retirement; and,
- C. An award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in the prosecution of this action; and,
- D. A declaration that Defendants' conduct was a violation of ERISA; and,
- E. An Order barring Defendants from further conduct that violates ERISA; and,
- F. Such other relief that this Court deems just and proper.

### COUNT II Breach of Contract

- 32. Plaintiff restates and re-alleges ¶¶ 1-31 herein.
- 33. Plaintiff and Defendants are parties to the LTD Policy and the Plan.
- 34. The LTD Policy and the Plan constitute a valid and binding contract between Plaintiff and Defendants.
- 35. Defendants owe Plaintiff long-term disability benefits pursuant to the terms of the LTD Policy.
- 36. Defendants have failed to provide Plaintiff with the long-term disability benefits pursuant to the terms of the LTD Policy.
- 37. Plaintiff has suffered damages in the amount of the LTD Policy and Plan benefits, to

which she is due, as she remains unable to work due to her disability.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Honorable Court grant her relief as follows:

- A. An award of damages equal to the total sum of LTD payment pursuant to the terms of the LTD Policy retroactive to February 22, 2016, with interest;
- B. An Order for the reinstatement of Plaintiff's LTD benefits from the date of its Order until the termination of the LTD Policy by its terms or the Plaintiff's attainment of the age of retirement;
- C. An award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in the prosecution of this action; and
- D. Such other relief that this Court deems just and proper.

### COUNT III Breach of Fiduciary Duty (29 U.S.C. 1132(a)(2))

- 38. Plaintiff restates and re-alleges ¶¶ 1-37 herein.
- 39. At all material times, Defendants were fiduciaries with respect to their exercise of authority over the management of the Plan, their disposition of Plan assets, and their administration of the Plan including the LTD Policy.
- 40. Plaintiff asserts a claim of breach of fiduciary duty against Flowers Foods and The Hartford.
- 41. Defendants were obliged to discharge their duties as Plan administrators for the exclusive benefit of Plan beneficiaries and participants by paying beneficiaries and participants the benefits to which they were, and are, entitled.
- 42. At all material times herein, Defendants violated their duties as set forth above, and also by having done the following:
- (a) Failing to investigate or evaluate Plaintiff's claim fairly or in good faith, instead utilizing

the information available to them in a manner calculated to produce a wrongful but plausible sounding justification for denying benefits; and

- (b) Failing to consult with qualified medical consultants; and
- (c) Relying upon insufficient evidence and ignoring superior countervailing evidence.
- 43. Upon information and belief, the medical consultants used by Defendants to evaluate Plaintiff's claim receive significant income from Defendants and/or other insurers for performing medical records reviews and other incidental services, and are biased due to significant financial incentives to render opinions favorable to Defendants.
- 44. Defendants breached their fiduciary duties toward Plaintiff by hiring record reviewers who ignored multiple reports by Plaintiff's surgeon Dr. Mandarino, and opining that Plaintiff has no impairments, contrary to said reports.
- 45. Defendants violated their fiduciary duties by failing to act in accordance with the Plan documents, failing to use all prudent skill, failing to honor the duty of loyalty to act solely for the benefit of the Plan participants and beneficiaries, and failing to properly evaluate claims for benefits, including Plaintiff's claim.

WHEREFORE, as remedies for Defendants' improper actions, Plaintiff requests that The Hartford be removed as a Plan fiduciary; and that all other available and proper relief be awarded.

#### **COUNT IV**

#### Equitable Relief (29 U.S.C. §1132(a)(3))

- 46. Plaintiff repeats the allegations contained in  $\P 1 45$  as if set forth at length herein.
- 47. Plaintiff asserts that a claim for LTD benefits due under the Plan, without more, does not provide an adequate remedy at law in light of Defendants' continuing course of conduct in

violation of the terms of the Plan and applicable law.

- 48. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks equitable relief under 29 U.S.C. § 1132(a)(3) against Defendants as an individual Plan participant, on behalf of all other Plan participants, and for the benefit of the Plan itself.
- 49. Plaintiff requests the removal of The Hartford as Plan fiduciary as set forth above.
- 50. In addition, Plaintiff seeks an order from this Court requiring that her past and future LTD benefits be paid starting from February 22, 2016, that Defendants be enjoined from terminating LTD benefits for the duration of the applicable maximum benefit period under the Plan, and that she be placed in the same position she would have been in had she timely been paid the LTD benefits to which she was and is entitled ("make-whole" relief), including recovery of interest, attorneys' fees, costs and other losses resulting from Defendants' breach.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff seeks the following relief:

- A. A determination that Plaintiff is entitled to receive LTD benefits under the Plan, and for an injunction mandating the payment of past and future LTD benefits to Plaintiff from February 22, 2016 forward, covering the applicable maximum benefit period under the Plan;
- B. An Order, as an equitable remedy, enjoining Defendants from asserting any other income offsets against Plaintiff's LTD benefits;
- C. Damages according to proof, including "make-whole" relief as described above;
- D. A penalty assessed against Defendants for \$110 per day per document missing from the file and identified as this litigation progresses, in accordance with 29 U.S.C. §1132(c);
- E. Attorneys' fees, costs and interest as permitted by law;
- F. Such other relief as the Court deems appropriate.

#### Notice Pursuant to ERISA § 502(h)

To ensure compliance with the requirements of ERISA § 502(h), 29 U.S.C. § 1132(h), the undersigned hereby affirms that, on the date, if any, that this Complaint is accepted for filing, a true and correct copy of the same will be served upon the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of the Treasury by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Dated: August 2, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Kerneth D. Berman
PA Attorney ID # 34921
One Commerce Square
2005 Market Street, Suite 350
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Tel: 215-297-4495 Fax: 215-494-3544 kberman@kdblegal.com

William J. Fox
PA Attorney ID # 69898
1219 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Tel: (215) 546-2477 Fax: (215) 546-4698